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First Committee
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New York

Chairman: Mr. De Alba ..... (Mexico)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Introductory statements

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): This morning, the First Committee, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, will begin its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. Before I call upon the first speaker in the general debate, I shall make a brief statement in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee.

I should like to begin by thanking everybody for their support, which enabled me to accept the chairmanship of this important Committee, a Committee to which Mexico — through some of its most outstanding and dedicated diplomats — has devoted such great effort, and from which we are expecting such significant results. The particularly complex international situation, which presents new challenges and new threats, makes us aware of the urgent need to make progress on a significant number of pending disarmament and international security issues.

I urge the Committee first to identify specific and practical means for achieving the noble objectives to which we have committed ourselves; we cannot limit ourselves merely to the repetition of lofty words. Eliminating weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons; halting their proliferation and preventing their acquisition or use by terrorists; and reducing the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons: those are some of the urgent tasks to which the Committee must contribute.

Fifty-eight years have elapsed since the General Assembly adopted its first resolution calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons that could be used for mass destruction. However, today we still find ourselves in a world in which tens of thousands of such weapons remain — indeed, in a world in which some still consider such weapons to be a viable option. Even worse, the risks of proliferation have considerably increased over the past few years. I am thinking of both horizontal and vertical proliferation. We must recognize once and for all the disastrous consequences that the use of such weapons — either in a war between States or by a terrorist group — could have on international peace and security. Let us strengthen our virtually universal consensus for the total elimination of these weapons.

Let us also recognize, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan said on 21 September, that

> "It is by strengthening and implementing disarmament treaties, including their verification provisions, that we can best defend ourselves against the proliferation — and potential use — of weapons of mass destruction." (*A/59/PV.3, p. 3*)

He appealed for respect for and strengthening of the rule of law, and that appeal is particularly important and relevant for the work of the First Committee.

Acknowledging the commitments made in the fields of disarmament and arms control — and above

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all fulfilling them — is indispensable for carrying out initiatives that will enable us to meet the new challenges. The legitimacy and viability of the Committee's activities are directly linked to our capacity to enhance transparency, ensure the implementation of agreements, strengthen accountability and promote understanding and public support. Moreover, we must always remember that the principles and norms enshrined in the Charter and in multilateral disarmament treaties must be applied in a universal manner without double standards or selectivity.

The challenges we will be facing will test the capacity of the entire network of institutions which together make up the multilateral disarmament and arms control machinery, which, paradoxically, has long been in a state of crisis. The United Nations Disarmament Commission for many years has been unable to reach consensus on substantive issues. This year it was not even able to agree on an agenda. For its part, the Conference on Disarmament recently concluded its 2004 session without having agreed on its programme of work, a situation that has been repeated every year for the past seven years.

Given that situation, and taking advantage of its universal membership and broad mandate, the First Committee, above all, has the duty to reaffirm the urgent need to make progress on substantive issues and, above all, to identify specific initiatives that will enable to advance the security interests of all States.

Let us begin by adapting our methods of work and creating an environment more conducive to dialogue and cooperation, while not forgetting that the raison d'être of the multilateral system is to build and protect a universal political and normative environment that gives pride of place to shared interests based on the premise that collective action is indispensable to guarantee international peace and security, even more so in a global world.

For my part I am convinced that if we engage in the gradual implementation of particular reforms and if we succeed in creating a more constructive environment, then we will be successful in dealing with all the complex issues before us and will be able to make progress. This is a historic responsibility given the great danger inherent in the present international environment.

Before continuing our work for this morning, I should like to express my great satisfaction at having the support of a woman from the Caribbean as Secretary of the Committee. Ms. Cheryl Stoute is not only the first woman in this post but she is also a well known and highly valued expert in the field of disarmament. Her assistance will be fundamental to our work.

I now have the honour to call on Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, to make an introductory statement.

Mr. Abe (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the opportunity to address the members of the Committee, many of whom have been friends and colleagues for many years, as the Committee commences work on its challenging agenda. I should like to extend my congratulations to the Chairman on his selection to guide the work of the Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and pledge the full support of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We look forward to assisting their efforts to ensure that this will be a productive session.

Many years ago, former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld referred to the General Assembly's disarmament resolutions as "hardy perennials" of the United Nations system — "perennial" because of their annual reappearance, and "hardy" because of their proven ability to survive in very difficult environments. While those resolutions are non-binding, they contribute to a broader process of developing norms to guide the conduct of Member States. Sometimes they identify important goals that must be pursued. Sometimes they offer standards that can be used in assessing the actions of States in achieving specific goals. In some cases they put forward initiatives to inform the general public about some dimensions of international peace and security, such as the reporting of statistics on conventional arms and military expenditures.

(*spoke in English*)

It is clearly not the duty of this Committee alone to solve all the world's international security challenges. It is, however, its solemn responsibility to clarify, as best it can, the goals that members together seek to pursue, to insist upon concrete practical steps to achieve them, to assess progress along the way, to identify the need for new norms where they do not now exist and to ensure that the Committee's own procedures are adequate to those tasks.

The good attendance today from national delegations and the abiding interest of civil society groups testify to the importance of the work of the Committee. Members would not see such interest if their work had fallen into an empty ritual, a danger that the Committee must constantly seek to avoid. I am confident that, under the guidance of the Chairman, the Committee will once again succeed in avoiding that danger.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing this particular session of the Committee is whether it will be able to reconcile two often-competing objectives. On the one hand, the Committee must be realistic — both in the goals it chooses and in the means selected to achieve them. The Committee must also adapt to the changing reality of the world. On the other hand, it must recognize that its actions are based on profound commitments to basic principles that are not subject to renegotiation every year, including, most fundamentally, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. I believe it is indeed possible for the Committee to conduct its deliberations and to adopt its resolutions in a manner that reconciles those most compelling demands. It is not only possible, but essential — for the discovery and implementation of practical steps is the bridge we must cross to achieve our common goals.

As is both customary and appropriate, the Committee will once again consider several draft resolutions dealing with nuclear weapons, without question the deadliest of all weapons of mass destruction. Members should take little comfort in the non-use of such weapons since 1945, for all it would take is one single use to jeopardize the lives of thousands and the entire architecture of international peace and security. Nor should the Committee fall into complacency that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), having been indefinitely extended in 1995, will alone suffice to solve all problems relating to the achievement of its non-proliferation and disarmament goals. I hope that the Committee's deliberations will reflect the fundamental reality that both non-proliferation and disarmament must be pursued together in a mutually reinforcing manner. The wider the agreement on this basic issue, the greater the likelihood of reaching widespread agreement on the relevant nuclear-weapon initiatives before the Committee.

While biological and chemical weapons have been outlawed by multilateral treaties, they too will remain an important subject on the agenda, inter alia because of their potentially massive and indiscriminate effects, especially upon defenceless civilians. The real challenge here is to bring those treaties closer to universality and to secure compliance.

They may not look as horrible as weapons of mass destruction, but conventional weapons — including small arms and light weapons — continue each year to kill thousands upon thousands of people, both military and civilian. The illicit sale or use of such weapons has frustrated the enforcement of arms embargoes mandated by the Security Council. They have prolonged and aggravated civil conflicts and have had terrible secondary and tertiary effects on economic and social development, trade and the environment. I am pleased that the Committee is taking up such issues and I look forward to the deliberations that lie ahead.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs has assisted many member States in their work both inside and outside the Committee. We also seek to assist efforts at the regional level through the work of our three regional centres: in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific. I will be consulting with many delegations in the weeks ahead about the difficult financial challenges facing those centres — especially the critical situation facing the Regional Centre in Lomé, Togo — and I hope that the directors of all three centres will have the opportunity to address the Committee during its thematic debate.

Though the work ahead for the Committee will be at times difficult, I hope the spirit of mutual cooperation will provide its most basic inspiration. Members of the Committee, please accept my best wishes for a productive session.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Abe for his important statement, for the kind words he addressed to the Committee officers — and for his use of Spanish, from which I can see that he will support the work of the Chair through direct contact. I know that we can count on his continued support.

Agenda items 57 to 72

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Before beginning the general debate I should like to remind

delegations that rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly states that

> "Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected".

That has already taken place, and I thank Ambassador Jarmo Sareva of Finland for the kind words he addressed to me and to the other members of the Bureau.

I should also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Committee, sincerely to thank Ambassador Sareva for his efforts and dedication in chairing the Committee at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, which yielded very encouraging results.

I should also like to remind members that during the organizational meeting last week I proposed that, when speaking in their national capacity, delegations should limit their statements to five minutes and, when speaking on behalf of a group of States, to 10 minutes.

If we abide by those rules — the first binding and the second voluntary — we would save time that we could make use of later by devoting it to interactive discussions and thematic meetings.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The relationship between disarmament and the international strategy to combat terrorism and the paralysis of the multilateral disarmament machinery are the most salient dimensions of the current international context with a direct and substantive impact on our deliberations at this session of the First Committee. It is clear that over the past three years the war on terrorism has been linked in an unprecedented manner to the disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation agenda, in particular in the area of weapons of mass destruction and, more specifically, in the nuclear field. In line with what Under-Secretary-General Abe just said, this dynamic should not prompt us to make an artificial choice among our goals in each of those areas.

During the public meeting of the Security Council prior to the adoption of Council resolution 1540 (2004) (see S/PV.4950) it was stated that the time had come for concerted, effective and determined action by the international community to prevent non-State actors from having access to weapons of mass destruction. Mexico said that the most effective and lasting way to face the danger of those weapons would be to proceed to their total elimination through multilaterally negotiated disarmament agreements.

However, the international anti-terrorism strategy tends to emphasize non-proliferation to the detriment of disarmament objectives and, in particular, of the obligations of nuclear States in the disarmament field. Moreover, we note an increase in the number of declarative but not legally binding initiatives and instruments negotiated by a limited number of States and then offered to the rest of the international community for accession — but without any opportunity to enrich them. Here, Mexico believes that the advancement of a genuine and non-discriminatory non-proliferation regime requires more inclusive formulas, which, by ensuring the universality of proposals, would yield better results.

In the view of Mexico, the success of the anti-terrorism strategy as it relates to the dangerous front of weapons of mass destruction hinges on the fulfilment of disarmament objectives. Only in that way can the objectives in both areas be truly complementary.

An important and increasingly relevant point of contact for these two fields lies in the fostering of a culture of peace and non-violence through education for disarmament and non-proliferation. That would make today's citizens and future generations aware of the costs of an armed world and of the risks posed by nuclear weapons. In the meantime, the multilateral disarmament machinery is paralysed — at least on four fronts.

First, in seven years of stagnation, the Conference on Disarmament has still been unable to begin its substantive work. During its presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, Mexico promoted the convening of informal plenary meetings in order to try to find points of agreement, but we have not been able to overcome this lack of agreement. Likewise, the Disarmament Commission has been unable to adopt its programme of work for 2004.

Secondly, the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been unable to make substantive recommendations for the 2005 Review Conference. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force, and nuclear weapons continue to be produced and improved despite the numerous appeals made to halt all further development of nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, the repeal of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and the pursuit of national and theatre-of-operations anti-missile defence programmes, as well as the open search for new technologies and for new weapons that can be deployed and used in outer space, make the potential for implementing agreements in this field even more remote, and eliminate prospects for additional reductions of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons.

Fourthly, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) continues to lack a verification mechanism that would ensure its full implementation, which in the present context is a very dangerous omission.

In this regard, my delegation believes it necessary to reaffirm that disarmament plays a central role in the system of collective security. Here, the implementation of obligations undertaken multilaterally is the best way to avoid the emergence of doctrines that would endorse unilateral decisions and so-called preventive actions. For that reason, Mexico calls on all parties to the NPT, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to honour their obligations and to participate in next May's Review Conference in a constructive spirit, reaffirming that the elimination of nuclear weapons would be the best guarantee against the dangers of proliferation.

With the support of the States parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco — which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region — and as a contribution to the 2005 Conference, it is my pleasure to announce that Mexico is offering to host a conference of States parties to and signatories of treaties creating nuclear-weapon-free zones, with the objective of encouraging better coordination among them, ensuring scrupulous respect for the legal regimes created by those zones and supporting the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other areas of the world.

Our societies are increasingly demanding a safer international environment, which requires immediate action in the area of multilateral diplomacy. The problems are clear, as must be the commitment to solve them. We must recognize that disarmament is the most effective antidote to proliferation. With the same clarity we will be discussing ideas to ensure the implementation of obligations undertaken.

Before concluding this first statement from the delegation of Mexico I wish to encourage you, Sir, to create an atmosphere more conducive to dialogue and collaboration in the sensitive areas of disarmament and international security. Our efforts during this session must be aimed at revitalizing the role of the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ms. McDonald (New Zealand): We are delighted to see you, Mr. Chairman, leading the work of the First Committee. You bring considerable expertise and experience to that role and we are confident that you will lead the Committee to a productive outcome.

At this time when the Secretary-General himself has found it necessary to express his concerns for the rule of law, and when we are facing the possibility that weapons of mass destruction may fall into non-State hands, it is more important than ever for us to agree to work towards strengthened legally binding multilateral agreements with verification provisions that are as strong as necessary to provide the confidence that will finally allow us to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Disarmament — complete, verifiable and irreversible — remains New Zealand's goal. In that regard, New Zealand is proud to work towards nuclear disarmament with the other members of the New Agenda Coalition. We strongly support the statement that is to be made by Sweden on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Currently, much international energy is being concentrated on various non-proliferation initiatives. These certainly have a contribution to make in curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and New Zealand has, over the past year, demonstrated its support by: contributing NZ$1 million to the Group of Eight Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, a practical programme addressing problems that pose a real risk to global security; endorsing the statement of interdiction principles as set out under the Proliferation Security Initiative; and participating in initiatives to tighten export controls on items that could contribute to weapons of mass destruction, including through support of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). It is important, however, that such control should not impede knowledge or technology flows to countries that can demonstrate full treaty compliance. Moreover, last March, we sponsored, in partnership with the International Peace Academy, a conference entitled

"Weapons of mass destruction and the United Nations: diverse threats and collective responses".

Those practical, yet essentially ad hoc measures and activities are, however, in our view in no way a substitute for the development of strong and effective multilateral disarmament instruments. In New Zealand's view the most effective non-proliferation moves we could make collectively would be to ensure and enhance compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in all its aspects including nuclear disarmament, to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force and to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty. We believe that the foundation of any multilateral disarmament treaty, if it is to be effective, must be a robust and comprehensive verification mechanism.

This year New Zealand began its first two-year term on the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The credibility of the verification regime is central to the effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and New Zealand will pay attention to issues such as the methodology for inspection selection, possibilities for increased inspection of other chemical production facilities and the use of the challenge inspection mechanism.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is a key organization in the context of verification and confidence-building, working with member States to safeguard and secure nuclear materials for exclusively peaceful purposes. The past couple of years, during which New Zealand has served as a member of the Agency's Board of Governors, have been particularly challenging for the Agency. Among the difficult issues that the Board has dealt with recently, New Zealand remains concerned about Iran's nuclear programme and the questions relating to verification, that remain outstanding. In this context North Korea's nuclear programme is also of concern. Those two examples illustrate the key importance of the Agency's work in contributing to the effective functioning of the non-proliferation regime. New Zealand congratulates the Director General and his staff on the professional manner in which they have undertaken their work.

Finally, New Zealand would like to register its thanks and appreciation for the tireless and often unpaid work being done by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in keeping information and debate flowing about these issues and for keeping up the pressure on Governments to take practical steps towards disarmament. New Zealand has now set aside annual funding to assist NGOs in implementing the recommendations of the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/57/124) which was presented to the Committee in 2002. It is vital that an informed civil society take an active interest in what we are doing in these closed committee rooms. After all, we are talking about how to control and eliminate weapons that could destroy the world.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area (EEA), and the countries of the stabilization and association process Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro align themselves with this statement.

In the spirit of reform and revitalization of the First Committee, the European Union (EU) in this statement will focus on the broader dimension of security, non-proliferation and disarmament issues. The EU will elaborate on its position on the specific issues in more detail during the thematic debates.

As of May this year, the European Union has been enlarged to 25 member States. A larger EU contributes to prosperity, stability and security for all Europeans — now, some 450 million people share the benefits of an internal market, of increasingly converging views on justice and home affairs and of a common foreign and security policy. A European security strategy and a European Union strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have been adopted in the past year. Within the framework of the First Committee, the EU considers the Union's enlargement an important development, because in our view strengthening cooperation across borders and across issues is the best answer to the challenges the world faces.

Over the past decade, no region in the world has been untouched by armed conflict. Most of these conflicts have been within States rather than between them. More than 4 million people have died in wars, 90 per cent of them civilians. More than 18 million people have left their homes as a result of conflict. In many

parts of the world, poverty and disease cause untold suffering and give rise to pressing security concerns. Half the world's population lives on less than €2 a day. AIDS is now one of the most devastating pandemics in human history and contributes to the breakdown of societies. New diseases can spread rapidly and become global threats. In many cases, economic failure is linked to political problems and violent conflict.

The world today is a globalized world of increasingly open borders. Flows of trade and investment, the development of technology and the spread of democracy have brought freedom and prosperity to many people. On the other hand, there is an important downside. These developments have increased the scope for hostile non-State groups to play a threatening part in international affairs. In this globalized world, so dependent on an interconnected infrastructure in transport, energy, information, health and other fields, the logistic possibilities of such groups to cause harm have increased. The world today forces us all to think globally, across borders and across issues. So in thinking about the policies we could develop in the field of security, disarmament and non-proliferation, we should also take a broad approach. I should therefore like to touch upon the worldwide threats we identify, the strategic objectives all of us could share to counter those threats, and what that means for our policy decisions.

What are the key threats to our security environment, wherever our countries are located? The EU identifies five, which, more than ever, tend to overlap.

First, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is potentially the greatest threat to global security. International treaty regimes and export control arrangements are in place to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and have probably helped to counter that spread. We have now, however, entered a new and dangerous period that raises the possibility of a weapons-of-mass-destruction arms race and of acquisition by non-State actors. Proliferation is driven by a small number of countries and individuals but presents a real threat through the spread of technology and information and because proliferating countries may help one another. Alarmingly, these developments take place outside the current control regimes. The possession of nuclear weapons by States outside the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and non-compliance with the Treaty's provisions by States parties to the Treaty, undermine non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Furthermore, advances in biological sciences may increase the potency of biological weapons in years to come. Attacks with chemical and radiological materials are also a serious possibility. The spread of missile technology adds a further serious element of instability.

A second key threat is terrorism. Increasingly, terrorist movements are well resourced, are connected by electronic networks, and are willing to use any means to achieve their ends, from small arms and light weapons, including man-portable air-defence systems, to, possibly, weapons of mass destruction. The most recent wave of terrorism is global in its scope. We are particularly worried about a scenario in which terrorist groups acquire weapons of mass destruction. In that event, a small group would be able to inflict damage on a scale previously possible only for States and armies.

The third threat is regional conflicts. Over the past decades, regional conflicts have brought about a devastating scourge of landmines, a huge proliferation of small arms and increased opportunities for organized crime. Regional conflicts also increase the risk of extremism and terrorism and can lead to State failure. Regional insecurity can fuel the demand for weapons of mass destruction.

The fourth is State failure. Civil conflict and bad governance, such as corruption, abuse of power, weak institutions and lack of accountability, corrode States from within. In some cases, that has brought about the collapse of State institutions. The collapse of the State can be associated with obvious threats such as organized crime, the uncontrolled influx of small arms and terrorism. They form a breeding ground for extremism and terrorism. State failure is an alarming phenomenon that undermines global governance and adds to regional instability.

And, fifthly, organized crime has an important external dimension: cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants and weapons. It can have links with terrorism. Such criminal activities are often associated with weak or failing States. In extreme cases, organized crime can come to dominate the State. Another dimension of organized crime that merits further attention is the growth in maritime piracy.

Taking those different elements together — the availability of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism committed to maximum violence, regional conflicts, the

weakening of the State system and organized crime — any one of us could be confronted with a very radical threat indeed. Again, we can only draw the conclusion that more than ever disarmament and non-proliferation should not be viewed as a standalone issue. They are fully interlinked with other questions of security and stability at the global and regional levels. That is an important lesson for our work in the First Committee.

Let me turn now to the strategic objectives we might share. We live in a world that holds brighter prospects, but also greater threats than we have known. The EU has formulated three strategic objectives for itself: to address the threats; to foster regional security; and to further build an international order based on effective multilateralism. Let me briefly dwell on those three objectives because they are, in our opinion, not limited to Europe. If the threats of today are essentially global, then responses should, to a large extent, be global as well. That is why our strategic objectives could be shared by any country subscribing to our analysis of threats and challenges.

First, all of us should be fundamentally rethinking our way of addressing the threats. The new threats are dynamic. The risk of proliferation grows over time. Left alone, terrorist networks will become ever more dangerous. State failure and organized crime spread if they are neglected.

How are we to stand ready? As discussed earlier, in a globalized world none of the present threats is purely military, nor can any be tackled by purely military means. The European Union is of the firm belief that each response requires a mixture of instruments. A wide range of instruments is available. Conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start at an early enough stage. Multilateral treaties with effective verification mechanisms remain essential. Other important instruments are: national and internationally coordinated export controls; cooperative threat reduction programmes targeted at support for disarmament; control and security of sensitive materials, facilities and expertise; political and economic levers, including trade development policies; interdiction of illegal procurement activities, including through the Proliferation Security Initiative; and, as a last resort, coercive measures in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

At the same time, the EU will continue to address the root causes of instability, including through pursuing and enhancing its efforts in the areas of political conflicts, development assistance, reduction of poverty and the promotion of human rights.

While all those instruments and policies are necessary, not one is sufficient in itself. We need to strengthen them across the board and deploy those that are most effective in each case. The Security Council should play a central role. That is why the European Union strongly supports Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), adopted last April, which addresses serious concerns about the risk of non-State actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. The EU also places particular emphasis on regional security and deems it important that regional solutions be found to regional problems.

On the subject of small arms and light weapons, a regional approach is crucial. Within the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, regional synergies have proven very successful. The same applies in the context of weapons of mass destruction. The best solution to the problem of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is that countries should no longer feel that they need them. Strengthening regional security is an important instrument in achieving that. The EU itself is close to volatile regions, such as the Caucasus and the Balkans, and the EU will pay particular attention to the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation in the Mediterranean area, since security in Europe is so closely linked to security and stability in that region. The EU welcomes the recent positive steps made by Libya in this field. But also in regions further away, the EU is an active partner in peace. It will foster regional security arrangements and regional arms control and disarmament processes worldwide.

The third strategic objective is an international order based on the rule of law and on effective multilateralism. In a world of global threats, global markets and global media, our security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system. The development of a stronger international society, well-functioning international institutions and an effective rule-based international order should be our common objective. The EU is committed to the multilateral treaty system, which provides the legal and normative basis for all non-proliferation efforts. The EU policy is to pursue the implementation and universalization of existing disarmament and non-

proliferation norms. To that end, we will pursue the universalization of the NPT, the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreements and additional protocols, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Hague International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. European Union policy is to work towards bans on biological and chemical weapons being declared universally binding rules of international law.

If those are the threats we all face and the strategic objectives we share, what then are the active policies that are needed to counter those dynamic threats and to attain our joint objectives? The EU believes that in the short run it will not be easy to achieve political solutions to all the different problems, fears and ambitions of countries in regions that are the most dangerous in terms of proliferation. Our policy is therefore to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes of concern, while dealing with their underlying causes.

In working to resolve international problems, we should make use of flexible tool kits carrying all the appropriate instruments. We should fully support the United Nations as it responds to threats to international peace and security, including by ensuring effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Most important, we must all realize that there are few, if any, problems we can deal with on our own. The threats I have described are common threats. International cooperation is a necessity. We need to pursue our objectives both through multilateral cooperation in international organizations and through bilateral partnerships.

However, if the multilateral treaty regime is to remain credible, it must be made more effective. Implementation and universalization of the existing disarmament and non-proliferation norms have to be pursued. Non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing. The EU will continue to encourage progress towards systematic and progressive efforts towards disarmament.

The EU supports wholeheartedly the objectives laid down in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and is committed to the effective implementation of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the decisions and resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. The European Union will place particular emphasis on the policy of reinforcing compliance with the multilateral treaty regime. Such a policy must be geared towards enhancing the detectability of significant violations and strengthening enforcement of the prohibitions and norms established by the multilateral treaty regime, including by providing for criminalization of violations committed under the jurisdiction or control of a State.

The European Union holds the working of the disarmament machinery very dear. In developing our thinking with regard to the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and other relevant bodies, it is important to see them as mutually reinforcing, each with its own added value, the guiding principle here being that the existence of these bodies should not be a goal in itself but only the means to attain better understanding, better cooperation and, in the end, better results in tackling the challenges of our time. If restructuring is needed, we should not shy away from it. The disarmament machinery should serve to pave the way for taking decisions which make the world a safer place for all our citizens. For those decisions we need courage and leadership in all the world's capitals and a strong commitment to cooperate with others.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and Brazil.

We wish to express our satisfaction at seeing a member of our group elected to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session. Please accept, Sir, our warm congratulations and best wishes, as well as our assurance that you can count on our cooperation.

Ever since the Permanent Mechanism of Political Consultation and Coordination — the Rio Group — was created 17 years ago we have tried to adopt concrete measures to preserve peace, strengthen democracy and defend the development of our region, which is one of the most peaceful in the world. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, which is now in force, set an example for other regions when it established the

world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone. The firm position of the Rio Group in defence of international peace and security enables us to encourage the international community to take decisive steps towards a better situation for disarmament and non-proliferation.

In 2005, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will face a complex situation. Besides the difficult regional issues it will debate, measures have recently been adopted outside the framework of the United Nations in the field of non-proliferation that in no way contribute to a constructive debate.

Unfortunately, the outcome of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference have shown how far from consensus are the positions of the groups participating in the NPT. In this negative scenario we need to increase the responsibility of States to find the negotiating spaces that are necessary to comply with the Treaty. The Rio Group believes that keeping the integrity of the NPT is essential for the credibility of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. All commitments must be respected — not merely non-proliferation but also disarmament as such, verification and the inalienable right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Rio Group reiterates its position in favour of a total ban on nuclear testing and stresses the need for universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, including by all nuclear-weapon States. We reiterate that it is necessary to maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing and all other explosions until the Treaty enters into force. The Rio Group hopes that in the near future we will obtain the universality of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Likewise, it will be necessary to create a verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention. The Rio Group is convinced that effective multilateralism is the only way to maintain international peace and security and that joint efforts by all States to agree collectively on instruments and mechanisms will enable us to ensure mutual security.

With respect to the Conference on Disarmament, the international community's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Rio Group hopes that it will take up its role once again and respond to challenges in order to face all the substantive issues before it. We also wish to express our support for the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Owing to its deliberative nature, the Commission is the appropriate framework within which to explore possibilities for making progress in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We hope that a consensus will be reached as soon as possible regarding the substantive issues of the agenda so that the Commission can have a fruitful discussion at its next session.

The Rio Group hails the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and welcomes the fact that it will re-examine this matter in the new international context. The Rio Group renews its commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. In that respect we praise the work and progress of the Open-Ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Each year, the use of anti-personnel mines causes the loss of thousands of human lives and leaves behind survivors with disabilities. Until they are deactivated, they pose a threat to civilian populations and prevent the agricultural use of fertile lands, hampering regional development and limiting employment possibilities — not to mention the health care and rehabilitation costs resulting from the care of mine victims. This diverts resources that are needed for the development of our peoples. We hope that future generations throughout the world will be able to free themselves from the suffering caused by the scourge of anti-personnel mines. We call on all those States that are not yet parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — the Ottawa Convention — to comply with its provisions and to become parties to it.

We congratulate the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean on its achievements towards the objective of attaining peace and security in

the region. The Centre has strengthened its programme of activities by organizing workshops and arms and ammunition destruction events and by disseminating information — all in close collaboration with States of the region, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Rio Group countries welcome the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito on the Establishment and Development of the Andean Zone of Peace, adopted by heads of State of the Andean Community at Quito, Ecuador, on 12 July 2004, within the framework of the fifteenth meeting of the Andean Presidential Council. The establishment of that zone of peace is further proof that the States members of the Rio Group are promoting peaceful coexistence in the region and are developing relations in an environment of peace and freedom.

I wish in conclusion to express the view of the Rio Group on the issue of the revitalization of the First Committee. We believe that in order to improve the Committee's working methods there must, first of all, be mutual confidence and a spirit of cooperation among all member States so that the Committee can become a forum where issues of great importance for international peace and security can be discussed. The main objective of the process of revitalization of the First Committee should be to restore its political role in keeping with the mandates of Articles 11 and 13 of the Charter.

Mr. Traavik (Norway): The First Committee is intended to be a core multilateral venue for addressing security challenges. But clearly, the Committee has not fulfilled its potential. Efforts to make it more effective and politically relevant are long overdue. The ability of the Committee to face the threats posed by international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to deal with other security threats clearly needs to be upgraded.

For that reason, Norway has, as members know, organized two informal workshops on First Committee reform with the participation of countries from all regions. The second of those events was held yesterday. It is encouraging to note growing convergence on the way ahead. A paper outlining our perception of yesterday's proceedings is being distributed in the conference room as I speak.

Of course, other parts of the multilateral arms control machinery also need revitalization. The Conference on Disarmament has essentially remained moribund in recent years. We remain convinced that the Conference on Disarmament could play an important role, and we believe equally that it is high time that we cut through the Gordian knot with which it has been bound.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) reaffirms that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to international peace and security. Member States have an obligation to implement the resolution. Multilateral cooperation must be enhanced to that end. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is one of the main pillars of the multilateral arms control and non-proliferation architecture but, as we all know, the Treaty is under considerable strain. North Korea's non-compliance is a serious matter. There are also unresolved issues with respect to Iran's nuclear programme. Iran must fully implement the resolution recently adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors and allay justified concerns about its nuclear intentions. The lack of universality of the NPT is yet another challenge. We call for renewed efforts by all States to achieve universal adherence to the Treaty.

We all have an obligation to ensure a positive and balanced outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. That will be possible only if we are able to bridge differences among States parties in a spirit of mutual accommodation. Norway is ready to contribute actively towards that end. The NPT represents a grand bargain between non-proliferation and disarmament. A successful outcome of the Review Conference will be possible only if we manage to avoid a stalemate between the two. At the same time, we must strive to avoid one being held hostage to the other. Hence, there must be progress on nuclear disarmament. It is regrettable that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force. We also need a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty and we must address the issue of existing stocks.

The Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions is clearly to be seen as part of the implementation of the disarmament obligations agreed upon at the NPT Review Conference four years ago. However, we need additional and irreversible cuts in nuclear arsenals, including in tactical nuclear weapons.

Global treaties can and should be supplemented by less formalized non-proliferation initiatives and

partnerships. There must of course be no contradiction between the two, and we must ensure that they are well coordinated. The Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction is clearly a contribution to making the world safer. Norway was the first non-G-8 country to join the Partnership. We remain committed to the Partnership and to mutually beneficial nuclear safety cooperation with neighbouring Russia. Threat reduction is a crucial part of the broader efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism, one of the defining challenges to international security in the twenty-first century.

As a major shipping nation, Norway is determined to prevent Norwegian vessels from being used for purposes related to terrorism. Hence, we attach importance to the Proliferation Security Initiative as a practical means to uphold global non-proliferation commitments. Existing export control regimes must of course be adhered to and further strengthened.

Last year the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) adopted the Protocol on explosive remnants of war. The Protocol should enter into force as soon as possible. The logical next step is to develop an instrument on preventive measures with a view to further reducing the humanitarian risks caused by the use of certain munitions. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an important multilateral response to a human security risk. It is essential that the Programme of Action be fully implemented and that we get serious about the problem of illicit small arms brokering. Together with the Netherlands, Norway is promoting regional initiatives to get to grips with this problem.

In accordance with your request, Mr. Chairman, I have endeavoured to keep my statement short. But before concluding, let me note how gratified we are at the success of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines. We look forward to its first Review Conference and are committed to doing as much as possible to ensure its success.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Please accept, Sir, my delegation's congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

South Africa shares the concerns regarding the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction not only to individual countries but also to the international community as a whole. However, current endeavours to address those concerns continue to serve narrow interests which paralyse the multilateral forums especially established to address those concerns. Putting into practice the reality that initiatives to protect international peace and security are dependent on the collective participation of the international community therefore continues to elude us. South Africa believes that the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction can be effectively addressed only through the instruments established in the fields of non-proliferation and disarmament. Universal adherence to, full implementation of and compliance with those international agreements on weapons of mass destruction and the complete and early elimination of those weapons will provide us with the only genuine guarantees that they can never be used.

To our disappointment, the activities undertaken by the Conference on Disarmament did not bring us closer to reaching agreement on a programme of work for the Conference. The persistent deadlock and the helplessness it engenders continue to call into question the standing of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. If the Conference continues to demonstrate an inability to commence the required disarmament negotiations, it may become necessary to consider whether a better course of action would not be to suspend the Conference's activities until the adoption by the General Assembly of a consensus resolution or resolutions mandating the commencement of negotiations. Such an approach would create a situation that would avoid the apparently never-ending dispute and deadlock in the Conference on its programme of work.

The list of failures in the period under review does not end with the Conference on Disarmament. Failure to reach agreement on a number of fundamental issues at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) yet another cause for concern. South Africa believes that in order to avoid another deep disappointment in 2005, States parties to the NPT must

show flexibility and sensitivity to the genuine concerns and views of others. In that regard South Africa is an original sponsor of the New Agenda Coalition draft resolution on nuclear disarmament that will be submitted for the First Committee's consideration.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not entered into force as a consequence of the absence of ratification by States required to do so. South Africa continues to view the Treaty as an important measure to accomplish our common goals of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It is for that reason that South Africa's Foreign Minister participated in the meeting of CTBT supporters held in New York last month and signed the joint ministerial statement on the CTBT which was issued at the conclusion of the meeting.

South Africa is equally concerned at the state of affairs in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and is of the view that the Commission should not be subjected to the same paralysis as the Conference on Disarmament. South Africa urges that the Disarmament Commission should be allowed to work in accordance with its mandate. We stress that any proposals regarding the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery should take into consideration ongoing work on the revitalization of the United Nations.

It was also disappointing that the Panel of Governmental Experts on the Issue of Missiles in All its Aspects was unable to agree on a consensus report. Notwithstanding that failure, South Africa continues to believe that the issue of missiles needs to be collectively addressed through the United Nations. In that connection, South Africa wishes to commend the Chairman of the Panel, Mr. Santiago Irazabal Mourão of Brazil, for his untiring efforts to forge a consensus on the draft report.

South Africa fully recognizes and supports the inalienable right of all States to utilize the atom for peaceful purposes only, in conformity with the rights and obligations contained in the NPT. As agreed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference

> "... each country's choices and decisions in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be respected without jeopardizing its policies or international cooperation agreements and arrangements for peaceful uses of nuclear energy and its fuel-cycle policies". (*NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II), Article IV and sixth and seventh preambular paragraphs, para. 2*)

South Africa believes that we will find, as a result of recent experience, that existing instruments are not adequate and that the non-proliferation regime needs to be strengthened. This should be addressed collectively within the relevant technically competent and established multilateral institutions. While South Africa fully supports international efforts aimed at maximizing the benefits of nuclear technology applications for peaceful purposes, particularly in the context of accelerating socio-economic development, the sustainability of the peaceful application of nuclear technology remains dependent upon ensuring the safety and security of such programmes. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through its technical cooperation activities, has the potential to make a substantial contribution to our efforts aimed at accelerating sustainable socio-economic development, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the strategic objectives of the programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

My delegation notes with appreciation the commendable activities of the United Nations in the area of small arms and light weapons. It is for that reason, among others, that South Africa continues to attach great importance to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, as in the past, South Africa and Japan, with Colombia as coordinator, will this year again submit a draft resolution to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We hope that all members will join the consensus on this extremely important and relevant matter.

South Africa believes that strong regional commitments on the issue of anti-personnel mines reinforce national efforts in mine action. We are pleased therefore that the common African position on anti-personnel landmines, adopted here in New York at last month's African Union ministerial meeting, sends a powerful message on Africa's implementation priorities in this field. South Africa believes that the common African position manages, first, to evaluate our achievements in Africa, and, secondly, to recognize the challenges of the next five years. It is critical to addressing those challenges that we intensify our

efforts to mobilize resources, to clear mined areas and to assist those who have become victims of those lethal weapons. We continue to believe that these are the true key areas on which the first Review Conference of the States Parties to the anti-personnel mine-ban Convention, to be held in Kenya next month, should focus.

The common African position acknowledges that there are 48 African States parties to the NPT — which emphasizes the degree to which the Convention has been universalized in Africa and further underlines that the NPT has become the continental norm in eradicating anti-personnel mines. Among other things, it also highlights the obligation of African States to meet their stockpile-destruction and mine-clearance deadlines; the need to enhance the assistance provided to mine victims and to provide for their social and economic integration; to promote inter-African cooperation; and to further mobilize the international community in support of the continent's effort.

South Africa also welcomes the decision by the November 2003 Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) to adopt a legally binding instrument on explosive remnants of war, although South Africa would have preferred the instrument to deal not only with post-conflict remedial measures. We wish to reiterate South Africa's understanding that a central element of the obligations of States parties relating to cooperation and assistance is the provision of assistance for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of victims of explosive remnants of war. As we approach the forthcoming November 2004 session of the Group of Governmental Experts on this issue, followed by the next Meeting of the States Parties to the CCW, we believe that the one area where we have been making progress is the issue of compliance. South Africa wishes to thank those delegations that have expressed support for its proposal on this issue.

As is the case with other weapons of mass destruction, the possibility that biological weapons could be used remains a source of concern for my delegation. South Africa was therefore honoured to have been able to chair the most recent meeting of experts, held in Geneva in July this year to, inter alia, discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on enhancing international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of the alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease. In my delegation's view, much was achieved in focusing and streamlining the valuable information gained from the presentations and interventions made by a large number of participants.

In conclusion, the First Committee has the responsibility collectively to address concerns related to the threat posed both by weapons of mass destruction and by conventional arms. In fulfilling that responsibility, it is also incumbent upon us to agree collectively on actions that will contribute to and promote international peace and security. That responsibility should guide us in our efforts to revitalize or rationalize the work of the First Committee. Such efforts should be undertaken in an integrated and comprehensive manner in line with the Committee's mandate. In that regard South Africa welcomes the initiative by the President of the General Assembly to streamline the work of the Assembly, and the efforts made by Ambassador Sareva of Finland to strengthen the work of the Committee. My delegation would also recall the proposal that it made in that regard at last year's session.

Mr. Linton (Sweden): I am speaking on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, the seven countries which work together in the New Agenda Coalition.

We are pleased to see you, Sir, a distinguished member of the Coalition, presiding over the First Committee. We look forward to working with you in your efforts to make the work of the Committee more dynamic and effective.

Today, 13 years after the end of the cold war, the number of nuclear weapons still amounts to tens of thousands deployed or in storage, and we are faced with the danger of proliferation. If the nuclear-weapon States continue to treat nuclear weapons as a security enhancer, there is a real danger that other States will start pondering whether nuclear weapons would not be a security enhancer also for them. We also face the risk that terrorists could acquire such weapons. That is why we are more than ever convinced that nuclear disarmament is imperative to international peace and security.

Current events reinforce our basic belief that the only real guarantee against the use or threat of use of

nuclear weapons is their total elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Without nuclear disarmament we run the risk of a new nuclear arms race. Non-proliferation is vital, but it is not sufficient.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), a legally binding agreement which cannot be complied with "à la carte", relies on a fine balance among its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The core of the Treaty is that non-nuclear-weapon States will not develop nuclear weapons, in return for which the nuclear-weapon States will reduce and eliminate their nuclear arsenals. The right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is accorded to all. If the NPT is to stand the test of time it must be implemented in its entirety.

In 1995 and 2000 that pivotal bargain was further elaborated. In 2000, the nuclear Powers gave an unequivocal undertaking to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals, and all parties adopted by consensus a practical plan for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The New Agenda Coalition spearheaded efforts to achieve that result. But today we are increasingly concerned about the state of affairs. The commitments made in 1995 and 2000 must be upheld. Walking away from some of them puts the others in jeopardy.

The NPT has yet to be made universal. We continue to call on the three States outside the Treaty — India, Israel and Pakistan — to adhere to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. They should also put their nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and bring additional protocols into force. That three countries continue to stand outside the NPT undermines international efforts to achieve nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has yet to enter into force. It is particularly important that the 11 States whose ratification is a condition for its entry into force adhere to the Treaty without further delay. It is particularly disturbing that the United States has withdrawn its support for the Treaty and that China is delaying its ratification. We call upon the United States to reconsider its approach and upon China to accelerate its process.

Thousands of nuclear weapons have yet to be eliminated. The Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty between Russia and the United States is a step in the right direction but it does not require the destruction of those weapons and does not have any verification provisions. The process is neither irreversible nor transparent, and it is by no account far-reaching enough. What is the rationale in today's world for keeping thousands of weapons on each side, many of which continue to be on high alert? As a first step all weapons should be taken off alert immediately.

The role given to nuclear weapons in security doctrines and policies has yet to diminish. Instead of eliminating nuclear weapons, some nuclear Powers have plans to modernize or develop new kinds or new uses of nuclear weapons or new rationales for them. Some even entertain the notion that nuclear weapons may be used pre-emptively against non-nuclear-weapon States or see them as a possible defence against conventional weapons. That would go against article VI of the NPT and the agreements made in 1995 and 2000. It is critical that any such plans be laid aside immediately.

The zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East has yet to be realized. Legally binding security assurances have yet to be given by the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States of the NPT. Negotiations on an effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons have yet to begin.

In the light of the forthcoming NPT Review Conference, these and other issues need to be seriously dealt with. It is absolutely essential that all States parties to the NPT comply with the respective commitments under the NPT and that the Treaty be made universal. All States should jointly and effectively raise the guard against the further spread of nuclear weapons and thus prevent both vertical and horizontal proliferation. The nuclear-weapon States must comply with their commitments and pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith. This includes the implementation of the practical steps agreed to in 2000. Only a few months remain before the 2005 NPT Review Conference. The present prospects are not encouraging. Let us use the remaining time, including our work in the First Committee, to make some headway.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Let me begin by saying how warmly the Australian delegation congratulates

you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We look forward to working closely with you over the coming weeks as we have done on many other occasions in the past.

There is a wide recognition that the United Nations needs to become more responsive to the contemporary environment, and we look to the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for ambitious practical proposals that enhance the capacity of the United Nations to deal with the new security challenges. A priority for Australia is to strengthen the First Committee revitalization process begun last year. If the Committee is to stay relevant and enjoy the support of member States it cannot be seen as operating in a vacuum isolated from current threats and priorities.

Australia is committed to working to ensure that the First Committee delivers tangible security benefits. Australia, together with Turkey and Argentina, will this year introduce a draft resolution in the First Committee on the prevention of the illicit transfer and unauthorized access to and use of man-portable air-defence systems. The use of unauthorized such systems represents a growing security threat, particularly given their potential use by terrorists against civil aviation. We commend the draft resolution to delegations and we hope very strongly for its consensus adoption.

The treaty-based regime for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and working towards their elimination remains essential for global, regional and national security. But there should be no doubt that the regime is under severe challenge. Exposure of the A. Q. Khan proliferation network laid bare a widespread and sophisticated nuclear black market. The six-party talks relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are welcome, but as yet there has been little progress on halting North Korea's nuclear weapons programmes. Serious concerns remain about the direction of Iran's nuclear programme, and we hope that Iran will allay these by complying with the September resolution of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors.

In the face of those challenges there should be no question of the urgency of universal application of the IAEA's strengthened safeguards system, the additional protocol. We and many others are of the firm view that the IAEA additional protocol, together with a comprehensive safeguards agreement is the current safeguards standard required of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. An additional protocol in force should be a condition of nuclear supply by no later than the end of 2005.

Next year's NPT Review Conference will have the task of setting the future nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. Recent events have highlighted the risk of States misusing the NPT's peaceful nuclear energy provisions to acquire the technical basis for a nuclear weapons programme. We strongly support the developing international dialogue on limiting the spread of sensitive nuclear technology. We should be clear this is a question not of reinterpreting the NPT but of ensuring that actions by NPT parties are true to the Treaty's intent and to the global non-proliferation norm.

Like others, we consider that progress on nuclear disarmament is vital to the continued political strength and vitality of the NPT. We do not share the view that improvements to the non-proliferation regime should be linked inextricably to movement on nuclear disarmament. Such an approach puts at risk the essential security benefit which non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT derive from knowing that other non-nuclear-weapon States are not engaged in nuclear-weapons programmes.

It is disappointing that another First Committee session has come and gone without progress on the widely held aspiration for negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. Australia believes firmly that to be credible and effective such a treaty should include appropriate verification measures. We stand ready to work with all member States on ways to ensure effective treaty verification. Pending a cut-off treaty, we urge all relevant States to apply a moratorium on production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Australia is committed to efforts to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). With Indonesia, we plan in February 2005 to co-host a regional workshop on national implementation of the BWC.

The link between weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and ballistic missiles is widely acknowledged. Ballistic missile proliferation destabilizes regional and global security and is inimical to progress towards nuclear disarmament. Australia is eager to see the

Hague Code of Conduct firmly established as a universal and viable confidence-building measure to help prevent ballistic missile proliferation.

Exposure of the A. Q. Khan proliferation network illustrated starkly the critical importance of effective national controls over production and export of sensitive technology, materials and know-how, and of international coordination in the application of national laws. Australia regards Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) as a timely and appropriate response to the serious threat of WMD and missile proliferation, including the risk of non-State actors acquiring WMDs. We urge all States to act quickly and with determination in implementing that historic resolution.

The destabilizing accumulation, spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons continues to contribute to the breakdown of law and order in many regions. The priority for Australia is to assist regional countries to strengthen small arms control and enforcement capabilities. We were pleased to sponsor, with Japan and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, a small arms and light weapons workshop in Fiji in August this year. We are exploring further opportunities to work with regional countries to promote the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms.

In pursuit of a world free of landmines, Australia continues to work to encourage universal adherence to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Australia calls on those States that have yet to accede to do so as soon as possible and to make a clear commitment not to use anti-personnel mines in the interim.

The past year has provided significant security challenges, but it has also seen some encouraging developments, and it would be wrong not to note them. Libya's very welcome decision to renounce weapons of mass destruction demonstrated that weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes can be given up peacefully through open engagement in ways that improve a State's future security. The Proliferation Security Initiative developed to impede illicit WMD- and missile-related trafficking has evolved rapidly as a valuable reinforcement of, and complement to, the WMD treaties. More than 60 countries have now indicated their support for the Proliferation Security Initiative.

As we conduct our business in the coming weeks, we must keep in mind that resolutions and debate are not ends in themselves. We need to look for ways to reduce the time spent on unproductive formulaic work so that more effort can be directed to areas where we can make a real difference. The Australian delegation looks forward to working constructively with you, Mr. Chairman, and with all other delegations on practical measures to address emerging and existing threats to international security.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. It is a special pleasure to see a distinguished diplomat and friend, Ambassador Alfonso De Alba of Mexico, presiding over the work of this session. Given your professional qualities I have no doubt that you will be successful. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Peru fully supports the statement made by Brazil on behalf of the Rio Group. For that reason, and in strict compliance with the new procedure suggested by the Chair, I will be making a very brief statement.

I will not offer the traditional litany of complaints, albeit justified, of delays in initiatives and negotiations in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation. On the contrary, I wish to describe a positive achievement in the area of disarmament in the Andean region. The Andean Community — composed of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela — has achieved one of the most advanced commitments on limitation, control and transparency with respect to conventional arms, including confidence-building and verification measures. Those commitments were included in an international instrument called the Lima Commitment. I should also like to announce that the Andean Community has adopted its decision 552, which established the Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects. That decision is the first subregional instrument adopted to comply with the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action.

All the commitments adopted by the Andean subregion have culminated in the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito on the Establishment and Development of an Andean Peace Area, adopted by Andean Presidents in July 2004. That area includes the

land, airspace and territorial waters of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

Based on these subregional developments for the limitation, control and transparency of armaments and confidence-building and verification measures, I express my hope that in 2005 fruitful negotiations will take place, in particular on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and on the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I hope also that next year we will reach agreement on the agenda items to be covered by the Disarmament Commission through 2008.

Finally, my delegation is prepared to support any suggestion that will improve our working methods, on the understanding that they will promote the implementation of the resolutions that we adopt here.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): We are meeting at a time when multilateral arms control and disarmament regimes are at a crossroads. Events of the past year have shown that the multilateral system is under increasing stress on multiple fronts and have made it clear that concrete steps are urgently required to preserve and strengthen it in the midst of numerous and persisting dangers. We are also facing unprecedented security threats, which have become a preoccupation of all member States. We remain concerned at the challenges posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the clandestine transfer of WMD-related technologies and materials, the development of new types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, the weaponization of outer space and the threat posed by terrorists acquiring WMDs. In addition, apprehension concerning nuclear disarmament has been aggravated by the reiteration of strategic doctrines, by the continuing role accorded to nuclear weapons in security policies, by the sole emphasis on non-proliferation to the exclusion of other disarmament measures and by the tendency to consider the issue only in the context of terrorism.

Those concerns call for concerted efforts under multilateral auspices; these offer the only legitimate and lasting solutions. Such an approach is not an option but a necessity for reviving our efforts to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons and to prevent the further erosion of existing multilateral arms-control, non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. Yet we are faced with limited avenues and selective mechanisms to deal with disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

Concerning the non-proliferation regime, despite the high stakes involved, the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), meeting last April in its third session, was unable to agree on a provisional agenda and substantive recommendations, as had been mandated. In that regard Indonesia has long actively supported efforts to further enhance the credibility of the NPT. The 2005 Review Conference offers opportunities to deal effectively with the three pillars of the NPT: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States has continued to elude us. We are afraid that continued delay in achieving that goal might lead to the resumption of testing. The Final Declaration adopted at the Third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held last year, identified measures to attain that objective. We hope that unilateral moratoriums will continue with a view to pursuing a permanent and legally binding commitment to end nuclear testing in all its aspects.

In spite of delays and difficulties in the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), States are firmly committed to destroying their stockpiles within the time frame established by the Convention. It is particularly gratifying to note that the verification mechanism is being applied in an equitable manner without hampering the economic and technological development of States parties to the CWC.

With regard to biological weapons, we note with disappointment that efforts to formulate measures for preventing and controlling deliberate biological or toxin attacks have not been productive. We hope, however, that the outcome of the annual Meetings of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) will contribute to promoting common understanding, effective action and better

implementation of the Convention as we approach the convening of the sixth Review Conference, to be held in 2006.

Positive developments continue in regional disarmament endeavours in some parts of the globe. We are gratified that differences among regional States and between them and external Powers with respect to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia are being resolved to the satisfaction of the parties concerned. As far as the Bangkok Treaty on a South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone is concerned, consultations with nuclear-weapon States are particularly important to seek a mutually satisfactory solution for their accession to the relevant protocol. Indonesia and other signatories to the Treaty remain hopeful that the ongoing efforts with nuclear Powers will be productive in the foreseeable future in the context of strengthening the efficacy of South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In a renewed effort by the United Nations to address the question of missiles, the Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles in All Their Aspects was expected to deal with missile-related concerns, explore modalities to combat the danger of proliferation and consider the need for a multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive, transparent and non-discriminatory regime under the auspices of the United Nations. But, unfortunately, given the complexity of the issues, the Group was unable to submit a final report.

My delegation was encouraged by the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the relationship between disarmament and development with the objective of keeping military spending at the lowest possible level to meet disarmament and development commitments as enshrined in the Final Document of the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. We welcome the Group's recommendations, including that related to the importance of exercising restraint in military spending with a view to providing resources that can be utilized for social and economic development.

On the issue of small arms and light weapons, the First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects at the National, Regional and Global Levels, held last year, facilitated the sharing of national reports and provided a clear picture of the international community's commitment to combating this menace. In that regard, we commend the establishment and work of the Open-Ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We also look forward to the second Biennial Meeting, to be held in 2005.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction continues to be implemented as many States have abandoned their production. Many stockpiled mines have been destroyed and humanitarian mine action endeavours have registered a substantial increase in many regions of the world. The forthcoming First Review Conference, to be held in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December, will provide an opportunity to reassess our achievements and intensify our efforts to mobilize resources leading ultimately to a world that will be free of anti-personnel mines.

In recent years we have witnessed a diminished commitment to multilateral agreements and cooperation. The centrality of multilateralism as the core principle of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation is being undermined. The disarmament machinery is being eroded, which is precipitating a crisis of unprecedented magnitude. The Disarmament Commission has been deadlocked and has been prevented from making substantive proposals on nuclear disarmament and conventional armaments as mandated by General Assembly decision 52/492. That unfortunate situation was repeated once again this year, when the substantive session of the Commission could not take place because differences still existed among member States with regard to determining the agenda items.

The Conference on Disarmament has, for eight years in a row, continued to be paralysed. Despite intense consultations and positive suggestions and initiatives such as the proposal made by the representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Chile, Colombia and Sweden — the five ambassadors proposal — it remains unable to break the impasse and to agree on a programme of work. Such a prolonged stalemate is symptomatic of a much deeper malaise regarding the role of multilateralism in dealing with disarmament issues.

To add to this dismay and disappointment, questions have been raised about the role and functioning of the First Committee as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It is now widely acknowledged that the First Committee should undergo an improvement of its methods of work to further facilitate the international community's endeavours in addressing these issues.

It is a truism that there can be no lasting security without disarmament. The United Nations disarmament machinery cannot afford to allow its agenda to remain suspended. Our disarmament agenda should be revived urgently and the highest priority should be attached to the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

However, we are of the view that any change in the disarmament agenda and the disarmament machinery, including the First Committee as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, should be made in the context of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV), in which all States can participate effectively on a basis of equality. Therefore, we believe that convening SSOD-IV would be both timely and appropriate to address existing and new threats to global security, and to review the existing disarmament agenda and the disarmament machinery as stipulated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In that way, as in any other special session of the General Assembly, the utility of multilateral disarmament diplomacy through the convening of SSOD-IV will be recognized and the role of a multilateral system based on compromise will be strengthened.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The list of speakers for this meeting has come to an end, but, following the recommendation to keep a rolling list so as to allow us to make efficient use of our time, I shall now call on the next two speakers on my list. I consulted them in advance and they have agreed to speak earlier than scheduled. I thank the delegations of Canada and Japan for their cooperation in that regard.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Canada values this annual gathering of those engaged in the disarmament and security diplomacy of their respective States as a manifestation of the universal concern and commitment with regard to ensuring a peaceful and secure world. We are aware that major threats to that objective remain and have the potential in some cases to negate overnight the social and economic accomplishments of decades, not to mention being able to exact a toll of human life that is inconceivable. As an international community, we have made great strides in developing common norms of behaviour and in eradicating entire categories of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). We have concluded comprehensive prohibitions on biological and chemical weapons, adopted a new protocol on explosive remnants of war to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and have been working progressively to reduce and finally eliminate nuclear weapons — the ultimate weapons of indiscriminate mass destruction.

The non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament enterprise is both a complex and a collective one. It is complex in its subject matter and interdependencies, and it is collective in that its effectiveness rests on the ability of all Member States to respect and uphold its obligations. We continue to believe that the best way to deal with contemporary security threats is through multilateral cooperation premised on the rule of law. Legally binding agreements equipped with robust verification provisions that afford a high degree of assurance that any non-compliance will be detected remain in our estimation the preferred means for consolidating advances on the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament front.

Reflecting the importance we ascribe to verification we will be proposing during this session of the First Committee the establishment, in 2006, of a panel of governmental experts to consider and report in the same year on the issue of verification in all its aspects, the 16 verification principles and the appropriate United Nations role therein. We believe that the international community can benefit from the results of such expert reflection, which we would hope would serve to identify practical steps to enhance the role of verification in the conduct of our work.

The disarmament agenda over the next year is a full one, and we are conscious of the wide significance that upcoming events — such as the November Nairobi summit on a mine-free world, which is the First Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production

and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; the May 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); and the June 2005 Biennial Meeting of States on small arms and light weapons — will have on the subject matter of this Committee's work. In that regard we heartily welcome the reform efforts under way to ensure greater relevance for the work of the First Committee in meshing better its results with the objectives of the principal treaties in the disarmament field and the activities pursuant to them, as well as with other work that is taking place. The universal nature of the First Committee's membership gives a unique status to its discussions and decisions. We need to extract maximum value from its annual session.

In that context, we support in practice, as in word, the desire to confine the general debate to the initial week of the session and to devote the time thus saved to the subject-specific discussions of the thematic debate. We hope that through a structured discussion delegations could address the substance of the chief disarmament-related topics before the Committee and thus help to move us from monologue to dialogue. Issues such as outer space, verification and compliance, a fissile material cut-off treaty, the state of progress in nuclear disarmament, small arms and light weapons and disarmament education — to cite just a few — could benefit from a focused exchange of views that could serve to inform subsequent action by the Committee in terms of draft resolutions or draft decisions.

We would also welcome more interactivity in such sessions and the inclusion of lead-off speakers drawn from the ranks of leading representatives or experts of concerned organizations. In our opinion, such a coherent consideration of prominent thought could yield substantial policy-relevant results and help the Committee to consider forward-looking initiatives, something that is not necessarily obtainable from the frequently formalistic processing of the Committee's draft resolutions.

The Canadian delegation is prepared to contribute actively and substantively to such a revitalized debate and we would urge other delegations to express their views on issues that are of importance to them. In that way, we think, the Committee's deliberations can once again generate the kind of added value that will ensure the First Committee's central place in the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Mr. Mine (Japan): I have decided to speak earlier than scheduled in a spirit of cooperation with the reform of the United Nations. Unfortunately, the printed text of my statement is not yet ready and will be distributed tomorrow, when I hope that delegations will have an opportunity to read it.

I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Ambassador De Alba, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that your vast experience and able leadership will guide us through this session, and I assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out your important task.

The Committee is meeting this year in difficult times. The international community is facing serious challenges in the fields of security, disarmament and non-proliferation. The issues before us include the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the increasing threat of international terrorism and of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists; the proliferation of nuclear-related technology through Mr. A. Q. Khan's extensive underground nuclear proliferation networks; and compliance problems of individual countries, such as the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Although the international community is facing such challenges, it has also witnessed some progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Examples are: Libya's decision to abandon all its programmes of weapons of mass destruction; the reaffirmation by the United States of its support for the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty; a steady increase in the number of countries that have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); an increase in the number of countries that have signed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) additional protocols, as well as of countries in which the such protocols have come into force; the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on non-proliferation; progress made in the context of the Proliferation Security Initiative; and strengthened non-proliferation efforts in the Asian region. Progress has also been made in the area of small arms and light weapons.

We must work together to find solutions to the problems before us, as well as to make further progress in the disarmament and non-proliferation fields. The next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is scheduled to take place a little more than six months from now, thus giving special significance to the work of this year's First Committee session. The Committee session provides an important opportunity to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime at a time when its viability has been put to the test in the face of various challenges. The successful conclusion of our work here will contribute greatly to the success of next year's Review Conference.

In order for the First Committee to fulfil its role and adequately respond to the changing international security environment, strengthening the functioning of the Committee is an urgent task. General Assembly resolution 58/41, submitted by the United States last year and entitled "Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee", was an important step forward in that regard. At this session of the First Committee, we must take last year's discussion one step further towards implementation. Japan is committed to reform of the First Committee and is ready to work closely with the Chair. Japan recently submitted its views on reform to the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 58/41; we shall explain our position in detail during the thematic discussion.

Japan has been making active diplomatic efforts aimed at realizing a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date. Japan again this year will submit a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", reflecting recent developments and providing practical steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Through the draft resolution we wish once again to call on all nuclear countries to move one step further towards the realization of that objective. We look forward to its adoption with the support of an overwhelming majority of member States.

The most realistic, effective means of tackling the various problems faced by the international community today is the strengthening and universalization of existing regimes and their full implementation. Japan considers the international frameworks such as the NPT, the CTBT, IAEA safeguards agreements, IAEA additional protocols, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention to be of the utmost importance as the basis for international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Japan's basic viewpoint and the ensuing concrete steps in this regard will be explained further during the thematic debate.

In addition to working on the issue of weapons of mass destruction, the international community should take steps to address the problems of small arms and light weapons and anti-personnel landmines as a matter of priority. We have made considerable progress in those areas, but much remains to be done. Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, has worked to submit a draft resolution on this item, and hopes that it will be adopted by consensus. Disarmament and non-proliferation education is also essential to make progress in these areas. Japan will also present its views on those topics during the thematic debate.

I call upon all member States to make maximum use of this security and disarmament forum to work to strengthen its functioning and to show the international community that the multilateral disarmament and security regime is indeed functioning effectively and efficiently.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, I thank the representatives of Canada and Japan for their flexibility.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me recall that I do not intend to convene Committee meetings without a minimum number of speakers. Today we heard 15 statements, including the one made by the Chairman. Yet, even with the flexibility that was shown with regard to scheduling, we still have 30 minutes left that we will not be able to use. The situation would be even more serious if we were to convene tomorrow's meeting when, for instance, there are only six speakers on the list, or the day after tomorrow, when there are only four.

I repeat that my intention is to follow a rolling list of speakers: delegations scheduled to speak on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday should be ready to make their presentations as of tomorrow, Tuesday. If they have a valid reason for not being able to speak, they should let us know so that we can make the necessary adjustments in keeping with the needs of each delegation. With cooperation from delegations

and flexibility in interpreting the Chairman's recommendations on making better use of our time, I believe that we will be able to use available resources in a more efficient way.

I also wish to remind members that the list of speakers will be closed on Wednesday, 6 October, at 6 p.m., when we will also need to know how many meetings will be necessary next week to conclude the general debate. In the note I circulated several days ago, I stated that it was my intention to limit to the maximum the general debate in the second week so that we could begin our interactive discussion. In that regard, I hope that we will devote a maximum of two meetings to the general debate next week.

I should also like to remind members that we need to be punctual. This will not be a major issue if we keep within the agreed margin of no more than 15 minutes. I believe that 5 to 10 minutes leeway should be enough. As I did this morning, I will be calling our meetings to order, within that 15-minute margin, as soon as there is a quorum.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.